

COUNCIL MEETING

November 8, 2023

The monthly meeting of the Rose Valley Borough Council was held on November 8, 2023 in the main room of the Old Mill, 9 Old Mill Lane, Rose Valley, Pa. President of Council Dave Firm called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Other Council members present were Leonard Busby, Joe Hare, Kathryn Mehan and Shannon Prown; Mayor Bill Hale; Controller John Neilson; Treasurer Mario Bacchia; Solicitor G. Guy Smith and Secretary Paula Healy.

Council members Shawn Stancill and Matt Sullivan were absent.

Residents attending the meeting were Deb DeMasi, Cheryl Harner, Ron Ploeg and Katie Rubin. Recycling company representatives in attendance were Ryan Eppler from B & L Disposal and Ryan R. Gibney from J. P. Mascaro.

After the Pledge of Allegiance, the Minutes of the October 11, 2023 Council Meeting were reviewed. Mr. Busby asked that the following paragraph be added at the end of the Public Comment section: In response to a request by Ms. Rubin and Ms. DiChiara, Mr. Busby said that he would work toward an arrangement where Council Meetings could be made available to Borough Residents by Zoom or other form of internet access. Solicitor Smith noted that only people physically present would be allowed to comment. With this addition, the Minutes of the October 11, 2023 Council Meeting were approved on a motion made, seconded and unanimously passed.

RECYCLING CONTRACT

The Borough's one-year recycling contract with J. P. Mascaro expires on 12/31/23. The request for recycling bids for 2024 was advertised in the Delaware County Times on 10/31/23 and 11/6/23. Two bids were received: B & L Disposal bid \$125,468 for weekly collection and \$115,468 for every other week collection; and J. P. Mascaro bid \$80,700 for weekly collection and \$60,300 for every other week collection. Mr. Busby noted the EAC voted to recommend that the Borough continue with every other week collection even though it could involve some inconvenience because, with half the truck traffic, it was the environmentally superior option. After some discussion, a motion was made to accept J. P. Mascaro's bid of \$60,300 for every other week collection of recyclables for 2024. This motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Harner asked if any progress had been made in being able to live stream Borough Council Meetings. Mr. Busby said he was still investigating how best to do this. Ms. Rubin suggested contacting Delaware County Council because they live stream their meetings.

ENVIRONMENT & EAC

Mr. Busby reported Jim Audley is retiring from the EAC effective November 1. Jim has been a tireless volunteer with the Borough for many years, serving on the Planning Commission during the planning for the Traymore development and most recently devoting his efforts to the EAC. He has overseen many clean ups of the Saul and Chadwick Wildlife Sanctuaries, created trails, organized the creation of the beautiful kiosks at the entrances to the two major sanctuaries, made information posts, helped with the knotweed program and built the Audley bench for people to rest when walking through the Chadwick Wildlife Sanctuary. Council thanked Jim for all his service.

Mr. Busby talked about the huge effort to eliminate the knotweed problem in the sanctuaries, noting that very carefully targeted annual spraying by Dave Hilbert will have to be an on-going expense.

Mr. Busby also reported the Borough will conduct a limited archery deer hunt by one authorized hunter in the Borough-owned Todmorden Woods only from November 27 through December 8, 2023, and then again from January 3 through January 26, 2023. During this period, the Todmorden Woods will be closed to the public Monday through Friday from dawn until 9:00 a.m. and from 2:00 p.m. until dusk. Leonard and Dave Firn will post signs in the Todmorden Woods and all residents will receive a notice about the upcoming hunt in the mail.

HIGHWAYS & INSURANCE

In Mr. Sullivan's absence, Mr. Hale reported that DCED's Small Water & Sewer Grant Program is not open this year, so the Borough will not be applying there to fund the Rabbit Run Sewer Extension project. He also reported that J. J. Danielle has completed the Todmorden Drive gutter repair work on either side of the northern stormwater inlet at the culvert.

PLANNING

Mrs. Prown noted that Council passed Resolution 10-2023 last month, authorizing the Borough to apply to the Commonwealth Financing Authority for a \$250,000 Local Share Account Grant for the final design and construction of a safe walking trail southward from the Seider property to Buttonwood Way. The grant application is due by November 30, 2023 and Houtman's cost estimate may come in somewhat higher. Mrs. Prown therefore made a motion that the earlier resolution be rescinded and a new Resolution 10-2023 be approved authorizing the Borough to apply for an LSA Grant of up to \$300,000 for the above scope of work. This motion was seconded and unanimously approved. Mr. Neilson asked why the Borough was not applying for a bigger grant. Mr. Hale replied that this was the amount of money needed for the proposed scope of work.

LIBRARY

Ms. Mehan had nothing new to report on the Library.

PUBLIC SAFETY

In Mr. Stancill's absence, Mr. Firn reported the October Police Report showed no incidents and the October Fire Report showed responses to automatic fire alarms on 10/4, 10/24, and 10/29. The Fire Marshall provided a flier on cooking safety. Solicitor Smith discussed rising gun violence noting more civilians own guns in Pennsylvania than any other state. Typical data was received from the Rose Valley Road speed devices, and Town Watch is proceeding as usual.

FINANCES

Mr. Bacchia reviewed the Status of Funds for October and reported he had reconciled the bank accounts with QuickBooks. Mr. Hare reviewed the October Income Reports and Mr. Neilson reviewed the Bills for Approval and answered questions. The Bills for Approval in the amounts of \$44,127.29 from the General Fund and \$519.58 from Highway Aid were approved on a motion made, seconded and unanimously passed.

Mr. Hale asked for Council's approval to pay J. J. Danielle for the completed gutter repair work on Todmorden Drive out of the Road Improvement Fund as soon as the bill approval from G. D. Houtman & Son is received. J. J. Danielle bid \$5,102 for this project. Council approved paying J. J. Danielle an amount not to exceed \$5,200 for this work on a motion made, seconded and unanimously passed.

Mr. Hare distributed the preliminary 2024 budget. After adjusting for the J. P. Mascaro bid of \$60,300 for recycling collection, the budget calls for total revenue and expenses of \$396,865, a 5 percent increase in Borough taxes, appropriation from Capital Reserve of \$9,886, and a millage rate of 1.27 mills. Mr. Hare noted the amount appropriated from Capital Reserve and the millage rate may change slightly when the Delaware County Board of Assessment Appeals provides the 2024 total taxable assessment value for the Borough in a few weeks.

Mr. Hale noted that the beginning of the year loan from Capital Reserve to the Operating Account will need to be increased next year from \$70,000, where it has been for many years, to \$80,000 due to inflation. He also noted that the Capital Reserve fund provides a buffer in case of high snowplowing expenses, stormwater infrastructure repairs or other unexpected costs. The 2025 Budget should probably not include any appropriation from the Capital Reserve Fund since this fund has now been reduced over the years to a reasonable level now that the Borough no longer owns a sewer system and sewage treatment plant.

Mrs. Mehan said she did not support the Borough using taxpayer money to purchase rain barrels or movie links for a film on climate change as requested by the EAC. She noted she does support promotion and education regarding these items but feels residents should make their own purchases.

Mr. Hare made a motion that Council approve the advertisement of the proposed 2024 Budget. This motion was seconded and unanimously approved. The proposed budget will be available for public inspection in the Borough Office starting November 27. The final budget can then be approved at the December 13 Council Meeting since it is more than 30 days from tonight's meeting.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Mrs. Healy reported that a symposium will be held on November 11 from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm dovetailing the intersection of Rose Valley, Wharton Esherick and Jasper Deeter as part of the 100th anniversary celebration of Rose Valley Borough and Hedgerow Theatre.

The Rose Valley Museum will be open on December 2 and 3 from noon to 4:00 pm featuring pastels done by Howard Stratton during his expedition to Egypt in the 1920's.

The Valley Voices will give a concert of holiday music on December 3 at 3:00 pm at the Old Mill.

The Rose Valley Museum will hold its annual Christmas Tree Lighting and Caroling event at Thunderbird Lodge on December 3 (rain date December 10) at 5:00 pm.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT

The Solicitor reminded everyone that the Council Reorganization meeting will take place on Tuesday, January 2, 2024 at 7:30 p.m. in the main room of the Old Mill. At that time, new members of Council will be sworn in and the Council President, Vice President and President Pro Tem will be elected. The regularly scheduled January Council meeting will be held on January 10.

A draft of the Borough's proposed social media policy was distributed to council members. Mr. Firn asked everyone to look it over because he would like this policy to be adopted at the December Council meeting.

There being no further business, on a motion made, seconded and unanimously passed, the meeting was adjourned at 9:28 p.m.

Paula W. Healy, Secretary